

REMARKS

The Examiner in the Official Action rejected claims 1-4, 6-12, 15-26 and 29-54 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the US Postal Service (USPS) in view of an article by Glen Stephens for the reasons set forth therein.

The USPS reference, as acknowledged by the Examiner, does not disclose ordering custom postal stamps. In the present invention, as set forth in independent claims 1, 32, 42, 49, 50, 52, 54 and 55, disclosed is an article, method or system whereby customized official postal stamps are provided that incorporate as a part of the official postage, images provided or selected by the purchaser. The purchaser is allowed to customize official postage by incorporating as part of the official postage personalized images.

The Examiner states that the Stephens' reference teaches allowing a customer to provide personalized postage stamps. However, applicants would like to point out that the images are not part of the official postage as taught and claimed by applicants. Quite the contrary, as set forth in the third paragraph of the Stephens' article, collectors....are able to buy blocks of 10 domestic letter rate \$.45....printed with their photo alongside. The Stephens' article teaches the providing of a tab adjacent the official postage stamp (i.e. personalized tab). See the sixth paragraph on the first page. As is set forth in the following paragraph, the photo labels must at all times remain affixed to the \$.45 stamp to be postally valid. Thus, it is clear that the Stephens' article does not teach the providing of a customized image as an integral part of the official postal stamp but a separate tab.

The present invention is directed to a method and system wherein an official postal stamp may be provided which incorporates the personalized images. As set forth in claim 1, the system is provided for allowing ordering over a communication network. In particular, an essential authorized computer system is provided for allowing a customer to remotely order and allowing customization of an official postal stamp. This is not taught or suggested by either of the cited references. In particular, the last page (page 15) of the USPS reference, specifically states that no living person shall be honored by portrayal on US postage. Thus, it is clear from the very article cited, that it does not contemplate the providing of customized personal images on a postal stamp as taught and

claimed by applicants. Thus, the USPS reference teaches away from combining with the Stephens' article. Further, even if the two are combined together, they fail to teach that the official postal stamp is actually being modified with the customer's selected image.

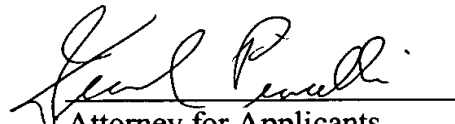
In addition, many of the independent claims include additional features not taught or suggested. For example, claims 15 and 54 include the manipulation of the image that is being incorporated. Independent claim 52 further includes the providing of a barcode ID. Independent claim 55 includes the incorporation of only a portion of a stored image. Thus, allowing the customer to customize preauthorized images by only selecting a portion of that image.

The remaining claims depend at least ultimately upon the independent claims which are patentably distinct over the cited references and therefore are patentable for the same reasons previously discussed.

In view of the foregoing applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,


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